

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 11012 111734Z

72

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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R 111725Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3747

INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION BERLIN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: BAHR MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENT

REF: BONN 10815

1. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S UNEXPECTED DECISION TO REPLACE  
THE YOUNG, AMBITIOUS ERHARD EPPLER, MINISTER FOR  
DEVELOPMENT AID, BY EGON BAHR, IS GENERALLY INTERPRETED  
IN BONN AS A SHREWD MOVE IN INTRA-SPD AFFAIRS AS WELL AS  
IN A FOREIGN POLICY SENSE. SPD CONTACTS SAY THAT BAHR'S  
APPOINTMENT SERVES TO REDUCE THE CHANCES OF CONFLICT  
WITHIN THE PARTY BETWEEN THE SCHMIDT CAMP AND PRO-BRANDT  
ELEMENTS. THERE IS CLEARLY GOOD SENSE FROM THE  
CHANCELLOR'S POINT OF VIEW IN TRYING TO DEFUSE TENSIONS  
THAT FOLLOWED IN THE WAKE OF BRANDT'S RESIGNATION, AND  
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PAGE 02 BONN 11012 111734Z

BAHR'S APPOINTMENT IS SEEN AS BEING INTENDED TO CONVEY

CONTINUITY IN THE TRANSITION BETWEEN THE BRANDT AND SCHMIDT REGIMES. BAHR'S APPOINTMENT MAY ALSO SERVE TO EASE PERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SCHMIDT AND BRANDT.

2. SCHMIDT'S APPOINTMENT OF BAHR IS DOUBLY SHREWD IN THAT IT DRAWS THE MOST INTELLIGENT AND RESOURCEFUL MEMBER OF THE BRANDT CIRCLE ON TO SCHMIDT'S TEAM. NO ONE HAS EVER QUESTIONED BAHR'S TALENTS, EVEN IF THEY HAVE TAKEN ISSUE WITH HIS POLICY CONCEPTS AND OBJECTED TO HIS SOMEWHAT DEVIOUS STYLE. IT IS A CONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEENT FOR SCHMIDT TO HAVE HARNESSSED BAHR'S ABILITIES TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT MACHINE.

3. THE FOREIGN POLICY ASPECT IS TWO-FOLD. FIRST, THE RETENTION IN HIGH OFFICE OF BAHR, THE ARCHITECT OF OSTPOLITIK, SEEMS DESIGNED TO REASSURE THE RUSSIANS AND THE EAST EUROPEANS THAT THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTEND TO TURN ITS BACK ON BRANDT'S EASTERN POLICY APPROACHES. IT IS TRUE THAT BAHR'S NEW FUNCTIONS DO NOT PLACE HIM AS CENTRALLY IN THE FRG-EASTERN PICTURE AS DID HIS POSITION UNDER BRANDT, BUT PRESUMABLY HIS ADVICE WILL BE SOUGHT AND HIS INFLUENCE COUNT FOR SOMETHING IN THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF GERMAN EASTERN POLICY. SECOND, THE APPOINTMENT OF A MAN OF BAHR'S REPUTATION TO DEVELOPMENT AID MAY REASSURE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THAT EPPLER'S RESIGNATION DOES NOT MEAN ANY LESSENING OF THE GERMAN COMMITMENT TO ECONOMIC AID.

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